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IN THE PAPER
TODAY

OPINION

Days of Denial: When it comes to local politics, there are the *Ins* and the *Outs*. The *Outs* are in these days, and the *Ins* had better start paying more attention to the *Outs*./A18

SPECIAL SECTION

Cruisin' Woodward: Look for the official guide to this Saturday's second-annual Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise among today's inserts.

CLARIFICATION

About those endorsements: The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers incorrectly reported Oakland County Circuit Court candidate Nanci Grant's endorsements for the Aug. 6 primary election. The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press endorsed Grant. A primary opponent, John N. O'Brien, was endorsed by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and The Oakland Press. Grant and O'Brien will vie for a Circuit Court judgeship in the Nov. 5 general election.

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Hills: Fowl exception fair



Farm animals and suburbanites often don't mix, and many communities have rules to keep the animals out. But Farmington Hills officials realizes their can be exceptions.

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Moved by the good deeds of an animal-loving resident and her neighbors, the Farmington Hills City Council is not crying fowl every time an animal gets too close. By a unanimous vote, council members approved the introduction of an ordinance amendment that

would allow animals and fowl to be within the currently-enforced 175-foot setback.

It would also allow exceptions for the ordinance requiring "that cattle, sheep, goats and pigs not be located within 200 feet of the property line, and that buildings to house animals such as fowl and rabbits not be closer than 75 feet to a property line."

The exception would be allowed only after a zoning board review and would be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Supporters and neighbors of Doris Kangas, who lives in the Pasadena Park subdivision north of 11 Mile and west of Orchard Lake, showed up to ask that a provision for an exception be made. Two youngsters thought Kangas was keeping residents close to nature by bringing the country to the city.

"Every city should have at least one farm," said young Teard Powell,

who lives on 11 Mile.

Brandon Strassberg, who like Powell is a budding nature lover agreed.

"Because of Doris' influence, I would like to work with animals in future," he said. "It's one of the best learning experiences."

Subdivision neighbors wrote the city council and planning department asking that an exception be made to allow Kangas' "bioplat."

"Over the years she has cared for many assorted pets," the letter said.

See FOWL, A2

They're NOT watching television



Local heroes: Instead of a night in front of the tube, youngsters were encouraged by the Farmington Community Library, Borders Books and Music and the YMCA to participate in "Unplug Your TV" an evening of magic, face painting, and fishing at the William Costick Activities Center. In the top photo, Kacie McGraw, 4, shows her cousin Jessica Williams, 7, a goldfish she caught in a kiddie pool. Above, Matthew Litky of Farmington, paints his face while his dad, Steve Litky watches.

Hills fired up over new fire HQ

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills has begun a process that should help its fire department become more efficient and respond quicker to emergencies of all kinds.

Thanks to a public safety millage passed by Hills voters in November of 1995, the fire department will begin construction of a fifth fire station that will be manned 24-hours.

The new station will be built behind the city complex at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake. Groundbreaking ceremonies are at 11 a.m. Friday.

The millage also provide for additional full-time firefighters, beginning with four this year. The city also tested and selected the city's first battalion commander to lead one of the shifts at the new facility, which is scheduled to be opened next July.

"It's been a long-term goal of mine to be a fire chief some day," said the new battalion commander, Don St. Clair. "I wanted a command position."

St. Clair, 38, will become one of the new shift commanders at the station. He was selected from eight career firefighters in the department who underwent a battery of tests and interviews.

St. Clair is well-known throughout the community under his alias, "Gadget." He has been the lead clown and creator of many of the department's skits performed for school children to promote fire prevention and safety.

In addition, St. Clair has been the department's representative on the Western Wayne County Hazardous Materials Team. Like the city's other full-time firefighters, St. Clair has been heavily involved in an inspection program to prevent fires.

A veteran of 15 years with the department, including eight as a full-time firefighter, St. Clair is also a captain for paid-on-call firefighters at Station 1, on Nine Mile.

"I'm used to going out at night," he said of his paid-on-call status. "The new shift system won't be that much of an adjustment."

"I feel that as the first battalion commander, I'll be blazing a trail and developing the new position," he said.

Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin said St. Clair's creativity coupled with experience made him a good choice for the job.

"Don has a very creative mind," Baldwin said. "He offers a different way to solve a problem."

St. Clair has a letter of appreciation from the city.

See HEADQUARTERS, A3

Sewer levels too high in city sub

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

In Farmington's Chatham Hills subdivision, the rain of disdain falls mainly in the drain.

That's why residents will have their home's downspouts inspected in an effort to curb excess water from flowing into the Evergreen-Farmington sewer system.

City of Farmington has inspected sump pump systems and installed meters in the subdivision in attempts to correct the problem, but sewer levels are still too high for the Department of Natural Resources' liking.

Some 70 residences with footing drains will be contacted during the next few weeks. City engineers, Orchard, Hiltz and McCliment, then plan measure water flow and compile a report for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality by June.

"We're going to keep on working at the problem," City Manager Frank Lauff said. "I hope this solves it, but I'm not confident at this time it will."

"But we have to do all these things," Farmington is going to check whether those spouts — which reroute runoff from rooftops to lawns — extend far enough from homes. The city requires they be five feet from the house.

In some cases, though, further extensions may be needed because hilly topography could be causing surface water to flow back towards footing drains, where it seeps into the sewer system through drain tiles.

Thirty-seven sump pump systems were found to be improperly connected to the sewer system during an inspection of 270 homes by the city's Public Service Department.

Homes in Chatham Hills were built in the mid-1960s through the late 1970s.

Most of the homes the city is concentrating on were constructed in the late 1960s and were under construction before new laws and restrictions were passed on sewer systems.

Also, the area has a lot of ground water, which creates infiltration, Lauff said.

All these things combined make it very difficult to deal with this kind of situation," he said. "Bottom line is: the DNR doesn't care. We're under permit to get that out and we have to do that."

On off and gas drilling

Drilling for oil and gas, once an issue in Farmington Hills, will be discussed at a public meeting 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 20, at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. 10 Mile Road, about a half mile west of Novi Road.

The meeting is sponsored by the Michigan Energy Reform Coalition. The group is described as "a statewide alliance of 19 citizen groups and local governments working for improvements in oil and gas policy" in its notices.

For more information about the group, call Joan Seamster at 1-810-963-7093.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Kids health program

Botsford General Hospital and West River Shopping Center will host their sixth-annual "Kid's Health and Safety Celebration" 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, at the shopping center on Grand River between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt roads.

The Health Development Network of Botsford Hospital will provide several activities for children throughout the day.

The event will include a visit from the Oak-

land County Health Department Immunization van, which will provide free shots for kids. Parents or guardians should bring immunization records.

In addition, there will be children's photo IDs, hearing tests, an appearance by a clown, hourly raffles, gifts, children's fitness and nutrition information, fruit giveaways, a CEMS ambulance for kids to explore and an Emergency Medical Technician to answer questions.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 3441 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office.